

September 27, 1976

Dr. Richard Ronk  
Color Additives Division  
FDA + Drug Administration  
Rockville, Maryland 20852

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Dear Dr. Ronk,

I was most interested to read the news reports last week concerning the deregistration of carbon as a food additive.

I have been concerned for some time about proposals to introduce activated carbon as a means of purifying water supplies. Before this becomes institutionalized on a large scale, it seemed to me that we needed to do much more research on the possibility that, particularly after recycling, the carbon might contribute carcinogens to the very water supplies that it was intended to protect.

I would be most grateful to you if you could send me the technical reports and references to the scientific documentation on the testing and safety of carbon black which you may have had in mind in the decision just announced. We are in the process of preparing proposals to EPA and NIEHS that would embrace studies intended to clarify some of the relevant issues and it would be most helpful indeed to have any available assistance with respect to an appraisal of the existing scientific situation.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr